



2011 National Survey of Speeding Attitudes and Behaviors

The 2011 National Survey of Speeding Attitudes and Behavior (NSSAB) is the third in a series of surveys on speeding that have provided data to help further the understanding of driving behavior and to contribute to the development of countermeasures and interventions to reduce speeding. Like the previous studies, this survey yields national estimates of behavior and attitudes toward speeding in the United States.

This study differs from the earlier studies in that it developed and used a driver typology based on the pattern of responses to six speeding behavior questions. Cluster analysis identified three distinct groups of drivers with similar overall behavioral tendencies. Among those drivers categorized, 30 percent are nonspeeders, 40 percent are sometime speeders, and 30 percent are speeders. Driver type is a powerful predictor of norms and attitudes towards speeding behavior, speeding countermeasures, experience with sanctions and crash experience.

Drivers classified as speeders tended to be male and to be younger when compared to nonspeeders. One-half of the drivers age 16 to 20 were classified as speeders, as compared to 15 percent of drivers age 65 or older. Speeders were also more likely to have higher household incomes; 42 percent of drivers with annual household incomes exceeding \$100,000 were classified as speeders, while only 25 percent of drivers with annual household incomes of \$30,000 or less were in this driver type category.

Norms and Attitudes About Speeding

While most drivers strongly agreed (67%) that everyone should obey the speed limit because it is the law, only 48 percent of speeders strongly agreed as compared to 68 percent of sometimes speeders and 81 percent of nonspeeders. Overall, 24 percent of drivers strongly agreed they get impatient with slower drivers, but 45 percent of speeders strongly agreed with this as compared to 18 percent of sometimes speeders and 14 percent of nonspeeders. Speeders (19%) were more likely to have strongly agreed they liked the feeling of driving fast as compared to sometimes speeders (6%) and nonspeeders (4%). Speeders were also more likely to have strongly agreed that driving over the speed limit is not dangerous for skilled drivers (11%) as compared to sometimes speeders (5%) and nonspeeders (5%).

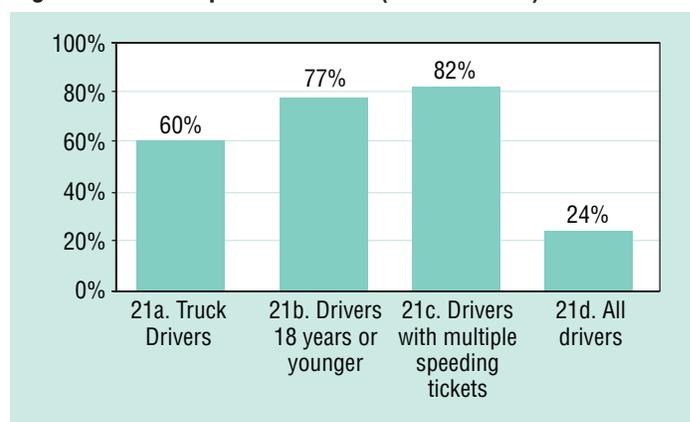
Attitudes Toward Speeding Countermeasures

Drivers were asked about countermeasures intended to reduce speeding. The two countermeasures drivers rated highest were

electronic signs by the road that warn drivers that they are speeding and should slow down (89%) and increasing public awareness of the risks of speeding (88%), both countermeasures that do not include any specific penalties to drivers. Two-thirds of drivers (66%) said that more frequent ticketing for speeding is a good idea; however, nonspeeders (78%) and sometimes speeders (65%) were significantly more likely to support more ticketing than speeders (54%).

As shown in Figure 1, 82 percent of drivers said mandatory speed governors for drivers with multiple speeding tickets is a good idea, while 77 percent of drivers support mandatory use of speed governors for drivers under 18. Less than a quarter (24%) of drivers supported mandatory speed governors for all drivers. More than 4 out of 5 drivers (81%) indicated that they would be very or somewhat likely to use an in-vehicle device that allows parents to limit the maximum speed when a teenager drives the motor vehicle. Drivers overwhelmingly said variable speed signs are a good idea for use in construction zones (95%), school zones (96%), bad weather (93%), and congested roadways (89%).

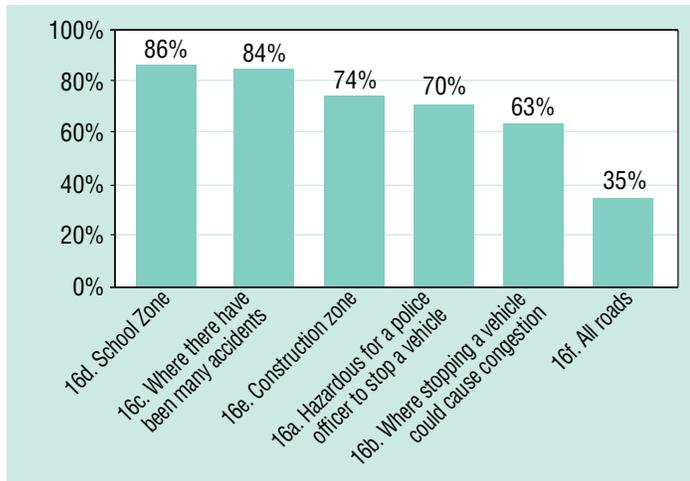
Figure 1: Use of Speed Governor (% Good Idea)



Automated Speed Enforcement

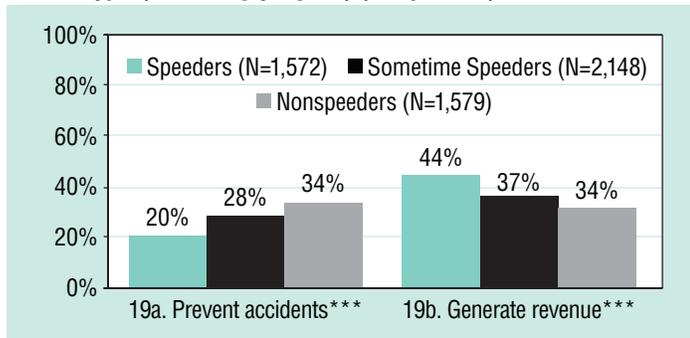
As Figure 2 indicates, the majority of drivers think that speed cameras would be useful in school zones (86%), places where there have been many crashes (84%), construction zones (74%), areas where it would be hazardous for a police officer to stop a driver (70%), and areas where stopping a vehicle could cause traffic congestion (63%). About one-third (35%) of drivers stated that speed cameras would be useful on all roads.

Figure 2: Locations Speed Cameras May Be Useful



Drivers are more likely to agree with the statement that speed cameras are used to generate revenue (70%) than with the statement that speed cameras are used to prevent crashes (55%). As shown in Figure 3, drivers classified as speeders were more than twice as likely to strongly agree with the statement that speed cameras are used to generate revenue (44%) than strongly agree that speed cameras are used to prevent crashes (20%). The same proportion of drivers classified as nonspeeders strongly agreed with each of these two statements (34%).

Figure 3: Attitude Toward Purpose of Speed Cameras by Driver Type (% Strongly Agree) (*)**



Speeding and Crashes

Of the drivers reporting having been in a speeding-related crash in the past five years, speeders were much more likely (30%) than sometimes speeders (20%) and nonspeeders (17%) to report involvement in multiple speeding-related crashes during that period. Speeders were also more likely to report injuries from their most recent speed-related crash (45%) than sometimes speeders (31%) and nonspeeders (24%).



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Personal Sanctions

While 9 percent of all drivers reported being stopped for speeding in the previous 12 months, only 4 percent of nonspeeders and 5 percent of sometime speeders reported being stopped. Among the drivers classified as speeders, police stopped 20 percent for speeding in the past 12 months. Drivers classified as speeders were more likely to get pulled over and ticketed and least likely to change their driving behavior as a result of their ticket or warning. Among speeders, 71 percent reported changing their driving behavior due to their ticket or warning, as compared to sometime speeders (79%) and nonspeeders (86%).

Speeding and Other Risky Behaviors

Speeders were more likely to drive their car when not wearing their seat belt, although the vast majority (83%) claim to buckle up all of the time. They were also more likely to drive after drinking too much alcohol compared to nonspeeders (3% versus 1%, respectively). Cell phone use while driving also differed by driver type. Speeders (16%) reported talking on the phone while driving during all or most of their trips more often than sometime speeders (8%) and nonspeeders (7%). Similarly more speeders texted while driving (6%) when compared to sometime speeders (2%) and nonspeeders (<1%).

Conclusions

The driver typology developed in this study appears to be useful in discriminating some driver attitudes and behaviors. Drivers classified as speeders reported more risky behaviors than other drivers and appeared to be the most resistant to conventional countermeasures and interventions aimed at speeding. Drivers classified as nonspeeders exhibited greater compliance with traffic laws. The third group identified in this study, sometime speeders, appears to hold much promise for speeding-reduction efforts. They accounted for close to 40 percent of drivers, forming a group larger than either that of speeders or nonspeeders. The sometime speeders appeared to be more amenable than speeders to countermeasures and interventions to reduce speeding, thus offering opportunities to reduce the overall prevalence of speeding on the Nation's roadways.

How to Order

To order the *2011 National Survey of Speeding Attitudes and Behaviors*, prepared by abt/SRBI, write to the Office of Behavioral Safety Research, NHTSA, NTI-130, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE., Washington, DC 20590, fax 202-366-7394, or download from www.nhtsa.gov. Randolph Atkins, Ph.D., was the task order manager for this project.

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